"Truth Is One, Men Call It by Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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Message of the East

VOLUME XLIV 1955 NUMBER 4

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A FAREWELL GIFT

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SISTER DAYA

Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLIV 1955 NUMBER 4

ETERNAL INCARNATION*

by Sister Daya

O Christ beneath the Bo Tree!
And Buddha on the Cross!
St. Francis wrapped in saffron robe
Where Jumna's waters toss!
Gouranga wedding Poverty
Upon the Umbrian Plain—
O Spirit down the ages,
None calls on Thee in vain!

Love-Wisdom freely passing
From form to gracious form,
One Consciousness embodied
Comes walking on the storm.
And with a Voice which echoes
From holy Himavat,
Calms, heals and reassures us:
"No time when I am not!"

*Reprinted from the *Message of the East,* Vol. 22

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

There is but one Christ-life lived over and over again—the life of selfless love, suffering and surrender. He who takes his stand on that will find all great faiths his own, all aspiring souls his kin, and will see in all Christs the One Christ—the One Krishna—the One Buddha: that eternal, unchanging Redeemer Whom no man in any age calls upon in vain. —*Sister Daya*

We cannot know whether we love God, although there may be strong reasons for thinking so, but there can be no doubt about whether we love our neighbor or no. Be sure that in proportion as you advance in fraternal charity, you are increasing in your love of God, for His Majesty bears so tender an affection for us that I cannot doubt He will repay our love for others by augmenting, in a thousand different ways, that which we bear for Him. —*St. Teresa of Avila*

If you have occasion to think anyone is your enemy, you must cover him with the choicest blessings. Our friendships need as much repair as our shoes. We have to be universal in the charity of our thought, for from heaven to earth there is only one force, one substratum that creates the magic of all phenomena and it is one's own Self. —*H. P. Shastri*

At last, when I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes, I saw thee standing by me, flooding my sleep with thy smile. How I had feared that the path was long and wearisome, and the struggle to reach thee was hard! . . .

But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day or night, nor form nor color, and never, never a word. —*Rabindranath Tagore*

A FAREWELL GIFT

by Swami Paramananda

(Reprinted in part from the *Message of the East,* March 1926)

Today as I am about to depart for a short time from this country after my long, long sojourn here, I would like to give you a message that you may keep as a gift from me—a farewell gift—although I do not like to use this word farewell.

The world has never been enriched because it has evolved dogmas and creeds, philosophies and religions different and divergent; but it has been enriched by the thought of blending harmony which runs through them all, and it is upon this under-current of harmony that our emphasis has always been laid. There is no east nor west, no north nor south, and it is our greatest misfortune when we create fictitious lines of difference. As I turn over page after page of my book of life, filled with the most intense activity, I find but one thought in all that I have done, but one thing that comes before me with vivid, glowing reality, and that is the heart of mankind. If I could put my finger on any one thing as being the essence of what I have tried to convey to you through all these years of preaching, I think that would be the gist of it.

When a man of the East feels that he has no point of contact with the Occident, that he is not in any way related to it, he opens an avenue for his degradation. There is no word strong enough. A man degrades himself when he thinks that because he was born in a far country, in a remote place, he has no share in the life of humanity as a whole. Who but a mad person, intoxicated with ambition and greed, can say, "So long as I am

happy it does not concern me what happens to other people, other nations, other lives"? As a matter of fact, it is not possible for any one to degrade himself to such an extent that he can have exclusive happiness, disregarding the happiness of others. This was forcibly brought before my mind's eye at the outset of the Great War, that we are absolutely interrelated.

"Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God." We are all children of God, but we do not all learn to manifest in our practical life those Godlike qualities which would show to men that we are here primarily to express spiritual attributes. There is no use our having religion, even with all its moral and ethical systems unless we can give it at least a partial expression in our lives. It is not found in theory, rather is it in our practical life that we find it. Our greatness depends upon what we are fundamentally. Man in his home, man in his waking and sleeping hours, man when he is taken altogether unaware, if under these conditions we can see him stand up and really show that he has an ideal, and that he has given himself to it utterly, it will not matter what that ideal is.

How do we know that God exists? How do we know that He is all-loving and beneficent? We know it because we see these attributes exhibited in men's lives, in characters which have blended with that eternal Principle, surmounting all distance and all difficulties through the divine Spirit. That to me is the sum and substance of religion. Peculiar phases of religious development, mysteries and complicated matters, these do not interest me in the least, but there is a way of reaching the heart of mankind, and we must find it. First, however, we must reach our own depths. That which we believe to be true,

that which we have been nurtured with, we must bring into our daily living.

We may preach to others and try to convert them, try to make them believe as we do; but do you suppose we can ever really convince any one until we have awakened in our own soul such ardor for the spiritual Principle that we can convey it without a word? Unless we have this ardor, instead of converting people we may repulse them and turn them away. That is a lesson the Occident can well learn from the soul of the East. It is an attribute of Oriental life. In India, for instance, men believe in it so tremendously that if a man is willing to endure anything for his Ideal, to die for it without a whimper, they will take from him what he has to give, without a word being spoken; they will receive it in silent contemplation.

This is not a cheap philosophy. God is never a popular subject, and those who have tried to preach Him have never been widely accepted. If Christ came, not as we have pictured Him, but in His natural garb with His simple spiritual message, how many of us would accept Him? I fear there would be more who would bring about His silent crucifixion than would recognize Him. That is the world. And yet the world is ever hungering and thirsting for the message that Christ brings. The world has need of that healing balm, but in its mad intoxication it forgets and tries to destroy the very thing that would save it and bring it blessing.

Often I have heard it said, even by well-known leaders of men, "There is no use trying to help mankind. Men are not interested in humanity, or anything that is going to bring harmony upon earth; they are interested only in themselves." It may be true, but should we be discouraged because this is the state of the world? When we have

a very high fever we are delirious; we do not know what is good for us. In fact we have distorted notions. We turn away from those things which would save us, destroy our illusion and give us healing. Yet that is the very moment when we need them. We need something fundamental and enduring. Many come with teachings that have a popular appeal, but only for a time. They do not last. They are like a hay fire, as one great teacher, a very great mystic and seer, defined them in his vivid, simple way. You touch a match to a stack of hay. It blazes tremendously for a few minutes, and then it is gone. Same way is it in human life. The things which blaze are not the abiding things. What we need is something which is enduring, which will stay with us and sustain us, and that is the spirit of religion, the import of spiritual philosophy.

If I have given any message with special insistence, it is that people may know their own worth, may know their own religion. Once when I was travelling, a gentleman asked me if I were a missionary. I told him I did not believe in conversion. "What is your work then?" he enquired surprised, and I replied, "My work is to infuse the Spirit which changes and transforms the lives of men." Whenever we have occasion to touch a life, some struggling and despondent soul, and can awaken and quicken in that soul a ray of hope, we have done our part. Whether that soul is true to us, or turns to something else, should not be our concern. The great Lao-tze once said something very wise. He said: "When you have done good work and another has benefited by it, why do you look for the third thing as the fools do?" That is one of the greatest lessons I have learned through life, and today as I am about to depart I want to share it with you.

The dewdrop that falls upon the flower bud, so gentle,

so unostentatious, is symbolic of spiritual work. It does not make any noise but it opens and brings forth a blossom. Is it not sufficing for the dewdrop to know that it had a part to play in the blossoming of a flower? It may sound abstract to you, yet it contains the secret of life. If we could all learn to do our little part, knowing that we are placed here, are led and are guided by a divine Hand, a Hand that is nowhere absent, what a beneficent force it would bring into the world! Our attitude of criticism and condemnation would disappear altogether from our minds; no longer would we seek to destroy others merely because they did not agree with us, for we should see that same divine Hand in their lives as in our own. There is a wonderful ancient prayer which expresses this universal tolerant spirit: "Let all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely each in his own path." There have been many beautiful prayers in the classics of the world, but none that gives in so comprehensive a way what I want to convey to others through my words. Let each one follow his own path. Why should he not? This message is needed today. In spite of all our advancement, if we can call it advancement, in spite of all our science and our material progress, we need this balancing.

Man must not forget God. Also he must not be content merely to worship the God of tradition. He should have a bigger concept of Divinity. When he says, "Thou art infinite and all-loving, O God," and then the next minute goes out and fights his brother, it is incongruous. How can he expect his prayers to be fulfilled? It is not that a person should change his belief, but that he should bring into active operation the things he believes in, the

things he knows to be true. What else can one do, and still be worthy to be called a child of God? A man may not speak or preach, may not profess any faith, and yet be the embodiment of all faith. This is my message to you—my message to every one.

A man may call himself nonsectarian or universal, but what does it imply? That he is not in any way, with his thought, his word or his action, interfering with his brother man. We strive here to realize this ideal, and I pray that this work may grow in spiritual magnitude, may unfold, so as to touch other lives and inspire them with breadth of vision, with spirit of tolerance. It does not strike any one, it does not hinder any one. On the contrary, it seeks to give inspiration to all, to bind the hearts of men together, and anything that will do that, anything that will unite men's hearts, whether it comes from east or west, north or south, we should welcome with all our being.

I am powerless to express all that I should like to express; but this I must say to you, and it is the greatest tribute I can pay you: I have lived with you here in a country which ordinarily I might consider as alien; yet I have never had that consciousness; that word is not in my vocabulary. I have moved freely both here and in Europe, and it has been my special privilege to feel in return a kinship, a friendship which is more than friendship, which is a soul relationship. That this instinct may be awakened in mankind is my greatest hope and prayer.

When a man comes and talks to you of lofty things, you look him over to see whether what he says coincides with what he is. If it does, your admiration is awakened, your faith quickened, and you are willing to listen. Same way it is with life in its deepest sense. Also is it true of

helpfulnesss. We may profess a great deal of sympathy, charity and love for others, but it is what we are in our heart that conveys to another heart. We all carry livingness of life, and in order to find our access into life itself, into the living world, we must be alive, vibrant with spiritual force. How are we going to play our part in life and do our duty unless we know how to be guided? It is not the aggressor, not the scheming, planning man who achieves his utmost; it is the man who has a sense of consecration. Herein we find the key to life, the key to inspiration. We may build houses, cities, civilizations, but it does not take much to destroy them again unless there is built within us a consciousness which will preserve them.

Money, clothes, food, gratification of all our desires, these are not sufficing for human needs. We must have larger interests in life. Greater comprehension will bring us greater happiness. If all that the modern world has achieved in science and industry and along other lines of advancement could be brought into blending harmony with the spiritual Principle, this would be a nobler, a far more peaceful world. There is no use our saying that we will not fight or quarrel, so long as our thoughts are producing things which will cause explosions. If a man continues to think bitter thoughts, if he maintains a hateful attitude, he will inspire another heart with hatred, and there will be a quarrel. When a man, however, grasps the higher order of life, when he removes such thoughts from his consciousness and learns that greatest of all laws—the law of love—the practical principle—he not only brings healing to his own soul, but he gives healing to the world.

It is not enough to profess a faith, we have to live it.

Where? Not merely in church one day a week. That does not suffice. No one can go and worship in his church and have that worship accepted by an all-knowing, all-seeing Deity, unless he has already prepared for it throughout his day. Work and worship are not two different things. We cannot play hypocrite in the realm of reality. A man who has noble instinct expresses it through his work, through his hands, his heart, through every part of him, because it permeates his whole being, it ever accompanies him. By looking at his face we receive inspiration. Not because that face is designed differently from other faces, but because it exhibits the glow of God. It has become an avenue of expression for divine qualities. Why does a man become sordid and ugly? It is not that God Almighty has put that stamp upon him, he has put it on himself. God has not made him unattractive; he makes himself so by his thoughts of distrust, doubt, apprehension and fear. These things are constantly marking him, but let him transform his mental constitution, and he will grow beautiful, he will become a beneficent force. Is it hard work? No harder than work that we do to earn our bread and butter, than our toil for selfish gratification—no harder than that.

What we need is understanding. Sometimes through our delusion we cut ourselves off from our Source. We can, however, learn to merge ourselves with the Infinite and what a tremendous factor that knowledge becomes in our life! Let us not blame any one else for our misfortunes or the misfortunes of others. We have, each one of us, our part to play in human destiny, and if we are fulfilling our part, if we are doing our share, that much of the world will be made better because of our existence, because of our love. Instead of holding the sordid idea

that the world is all wrong and that we cannot and should not trust our fellows because they are full of evil, if instead of that we began to believe men to be better than they seem, and to trust them because fundamentally they are children of God, would it not transform life for us and for them?

We cannot perhaps do as much as Christ or St. Francis in the way of sacrifice, but still we have that instinct within us, and we must unfold it from within, otherwise our lip praise means nothing. God is not a lover of flattery. We make a caricature of our life when we say one thing and do another. Let us banish from our hearts all unworthy thoughts, all bitterness, envy, jealousy, and strive to make this world one that befits God's children. That is my message to you: not a new cult, not a new creed, but a prayer that through your life, through your living, through your inspiration, through even your momentary actions, you may share in upbuilding this great world. As we learn the art of upbuilding, our hands will blend with the Almighty Hand, and our will, no matter how insignificant it may seem, how frail and faltering, will become part of that great Will. Only then shall we know peace. Because we cannot have completeness of happiness, or peace until we have learned to blend ourselves in harmony, in unity, with the heart of the universe, with the heart of God.

The Lord is in me, the Lord is in you, as life is in every seed. O servant! put false pride away, and seek for Him within you.

A million suns are ablaze with light, the sea of blue spreads in the sky, the fever of life is stilled, and all stains are washed away when I sit in the midst of that world. —*Songs of Kabir*

MORNING SONG

by Sister Daya

My Lord is like the shining sun
That riseth every morn.
My Lord is fragrant as the flowers
With every day new-born.

My Lord is like the word of truth,
Is like a healing hand.
My Lord is like the peace of God
We strive to understand.

My Lord is like the enduring hills,
Whereon we lie and rest
For wisdom floweth from His mind
Compassion from His breast.

My Lord is like the morning breeze
That blows away all care.
When death or danger threatens us,
Behold, my Lord is there.

And I, surrendering all to Him,
Lay all before His feet.
Could I but live to serve His love,
Ah, such a life were sweet!

Even should evil befall thee, it cannot be evil when thou lovest the Lord. Even the most fear-inspiring experience thou wilt recognize as a messenger from the Beloved. Through Love, verily, thou shalt attain God . . . Be thou content with the Highest. —*F. J. Alexander*

WINGED SPIRIT

by Sister Daya

(Her final Sunday Service, given in La Crescenta on July 31, 1955)

May we enter that inner stillness that is not peculiar to one country or one clime, that is everywhere the same once we pierce through the outer crust of sound; that inner stillness in which flowers and great thoughts and galaxies and human lives are being brought into perfection silently and unseen; that inner silence to which we can find access if our life is dedicated to it and prepared for it and directed toward it; that inner silence which can flood our lives and the lives of others with great vision and with a joyousness that is not dependent on happiness; that inner silence where the divine grace performs its magic.

May we, through that divine grace, hear with our ears that which is holy and uplifting to our souls; may we behold with our eyes that which is pure, spiritual and sublime; may all our thoughts, words and actions be consecrated to that One from whom we are descended. May that divine peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings.

There are, I suppose, as many ideas of what we call the spiritual life as there are human mentalities. There are an infinite number of approaches to the great secrets of the universe. One man approaches them, perhaps, through his work, another through his dreams, another through his emotions. Many and varied, indeed, are the ways in which we approach that something which gives meaning and purpose and livingness to this house of clay in which we dwell, and without which this bundle of flesh

and bones would be less than dead earth. It would seem as if the world at large has come to think of religion and spirituality as something that is contained in a formula, as something which can be written down in a book, which can be conveyed through word of mouth; as something which can be learned by rote. But I have come to realize that that which we call spirit, that something which gives the meaning and purpose to any religion, to any effort toward a higher comprehension of existence is so subtle, so fine, and, while so palpably important to all that we call the material is still so ethereal that we cannot put our hands upon it. In the great *Upanishads* the Infinite, Absolute One is described as that which we cannot grasp with our hands, we cannot sense with our senses, and yet which can be apprehended by one who truly desires to understand.

After I had chosen this subject (and I confess it was its title that first intrigued me. *The Winged Spirit,* the very sound gave me a lift!) I realized that any words I could possibly use would be inadequate to convey to others the thoughts and feelings with which it flooded my mind and heart. *The Winged Spirit!* How, I thought, since I cannot grasp it with my senses, can I convey it to others? Not by any explanation of mine, I know; but perhaps by suggestion, perhaps by persuading you to join with me in the search for this illusive Reality, this divine Something which, while it is nowhere is everywhere; and without which life has no real meaning; perhaps we can find it together. So come with me, my friends; let us together reach out into the great depths of the space in our minds and hearts; let us leave the earth and go beyond the stars; let us, like birds that soar through trackless space, rise on the wings of our own thoughts and feelings and

try to find traces of the *Winged Spirit* along its unmarked path. And it is not a hopeless search, my friends, for while we say "beyond the earth," "beyond the stars," this mystic path does not lead away from the world we know, but into its Reality, deep into its secret heart.

I remember long ago when I was a little girl, I gained some of my first spiritual lessons from an old gardener who used to tell me that the little bird, when it took its drink and lifted up its head, was not just lifting up its head so that the water could flow down, but it was thanking God for the drink. He would break the passion flower and outline to me the symbolisms that were contained in that flower. One day he caught a great spider (I was afraid of spiders) and he gave me the end of its silken thread, saying, "Now wind this thread around your hand; the spider won't touch you." And it didn't. In many such ways he gave me an idea of the wonderful provisions that nature makes for all its creatures. He opened many a new door for me, this funny old German gardener who used to bring his little tin lunch pail and invite me to share it with him; and through each door, I realize now, my budding soul felt the touch of the passing of the *Winged Spirit*.

In most fruitful ways, too, my soul continued to be nourished by my contact with my parents. Neither my mother nor my father ever gave me religious lessons; they never laid down any law as to what I should or should not do. Yet the essence of religion seemed to be in their atmosphere; it seemed to be exemplified in their persons. They did not go to church. My father was an agnostic, not an atheist; he didn't deny, he just said that he did not know. My mother followed more or less in his footsteps. But all through my life the exquisiteness, the

power to follow an ideal irrespective of personal consequences, the thought for others that was not a compulsion of duty, that sprang from a native love in the heart, the tender touch, the spirit that knew no hatred, constituted for me a kind of spiritual fragrance that hovered over both my father and mother. And all this, I know now full well, was but the tender nurture of the *Winged Spirit,* provided through gentle, loving parents for the growth of a young soul.

We have in these days become very "broad-minded." Because we no longer require a man to be a church member or to profess any religious creed to be accepted in respectable society, we feel that we have grown tolerant. We have, indeed, passed beyond that rigid puritanical age in which everything was so cut and dried that unless one was prepared to say, "I believe this and I believe that," one was branded as a lost soul. And because we have turned our backs on dogma we have grown to be a broad-minded people, we think. The world has advanced, we say; it has evolved. We fail to see, however, that this merely negating type of broad-mindedness, in and of itself, lacks the essential ingredient. It is the broad-mindedness of indifference: it is merely the tolerance of a carelessness that is blind to the inner motions of life, blind to those daysprings of inspiration from which come down to us the deeds, the actual creations, which distinguish the human race and set man apart from the beasts of the field, and which dignify him by the beauty that he is able to produce, by the great philosophies he is able to father, and by the living life he is able to live. We have forgotton this. We have grown obtuse to the touch of the *Winged Spirit!* We think we are broad-minded when the fact is we merely have no faith, no belief in any-

thing. Living from day to day on the surface of life, from pleasure to pleasure, from duty to duty, there are many who have adopted a completely skeptical attitude toward those who would still insist on recognizing the verities of existence. A person who would say that "love worketh no ill to his neighbor," that love is the true fulfilling of the law, and that "God is love," is called sentimental; such phrases are regarded as long since outworn, outmoded spiritual cliches. I do not mean to imply that we never speak of love in the spiritual sense, but I am indicating an attitude, an increasingly general type of consciousness which, because it is indifferent, because for it nothing much exists beyond the physical plane, feels no responsibility for setting standards. It doesn't care at all whether you have any religion or not, and it is this indifference it presumes to term tolerance and broad-mindedness.

Yet it is not that the *Winged Spirit* is absent from this age, for Spirit neither comes nor goes. It is always present, innate, inherent as the potential Reality in every manifested thing. Although it may not always be manifested, it is inherent. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, although that One Infinite Spirit is everywhere, in and through all, with nothing existing outside of It, it is nevertheless manifested variously. We cannot fail to recognize this. It would be stupid, it would be blind to say that all men are in every sense equal. They are not equal. They are equal before the law; they are equal as living beings deserving equally the best opportunities and consideration, but they are unequal in many ways. They are not equal in stature, for instance, in openness to great ideas, or in the gifts that they are able to bring to the human race and to themselves. What is it that marks the differ-

ence in human beings? It is the touch of the *Winged Spirit;* it is the degree in which the inward Spirit has been made manifest! We find in our present day and age many brilliant, gifted people, but their gifts of mind and spirit are being manifested in various ways and degrees—some in partially beneficial, some in altogether non-beneficial, ways. In these people the power is present, but the mind is holding down the spirit. The result is not that exalting, winged splendor that could have issued from them, but rather something that is heavy and dark, weighted and painted by their lack of understanding, by their lack of faith in the subtle, imponderable Power or Spirit. And it is this that makes all the difference between life and death, between beauty and ugliness, between inspiration and deadness. The uninspired, earth-bound uniformity of opinion on the subject of religion today acts as a tendency to drag down the spirit of man to a dead level, and makes difficult his true expression that should come without fear of consequences or criticism.

To meet this every creator, every human being should try to resemble the saint, the real saint, who does everything that he does as an offering to the highest Divinity that he is capable of apprehending, with no care for what his effort will bring him in the way of censure or praise from the outside world. It is only in this way that there can be established between us and that ever living Power a sort of covenant, a bond, an open channel through which It can flow unimpeded, unblocked, unclogged, into the soul of man. Each man's physical being is a temple of the Spirit, yet I was thinking of the difference that I have mentioned in human beings: how some seem naturally to step very lightly on the earth; seem always to get the inner significance of things rather than merely the

outer form. They seem to pierce through those veils of appearance which so often deceive us, through to the reality, the living reality of a situation or of a human soul.

What is it that expresses through them in this subtle, delicate and all-apprehending way? It is their true spirituality; it is the Spirit taking possession of "the temple." And this has nothing to do with religion or creed or church. A man may never have had any religious creed but he may be able to lose himself so completely in some tremendous enthusiasm, forget himself so entirely in some idea or ideal that he seems veritably to stand on the threshold of the kingdom of heaven. Do you remember in the little book *Light on the Path* where it says in effect that the artist who is utterly given to his work without any thought of return is farther advanced on the path of the spirit than that man who, apparently engaged in spiritual things, is really working for his own self-aggrandizement, his own illumination, his own blessing? It is good for us to remember this.

This brings us back as always to the great question of the ego. You know they say that all motion on every plane is in a circle; we always come back to where we started. So if we start from self, no matter on what path we go out, ultimately we come back to self, because self is the center of everything that we can know or understand. Now if this self from which we start is our little personal self with all its greed and all its assumption of importance, its vanities, its hatreds, its jealousies, its smallness with no influx of new life or inspiration, we eventually find ourselves without any belief; we find ourselves cynical and what is more, we find ourselves dead. The selfish man, the man who is utterly self-centered in

this little creature that struts around on earth, that man is already marked with the mark of death. He meets oncoming old age, not with the dignity and wisdom of a Rabbi Ben Ezra who said: "Grow old along with me, the best of life is yet to be," but with the crude lack of dignity of that old woman of whom someone said, commenting on her way of meeting old age: "She just took off her corsets and settled down." The aging of the ego can be just as undignified as that. Nothing of the subtle mystery of youth is left; nothing of the light and joy and beauty beyond the body, beyond the ego; nothing of that which does not age when the body ages, which is neither young nor old, but eternal. This is what happens to those who dwell centered in the circle of self. And this is why, when sometimes as we look out on the world and see people who make old age such an ugly thing, something revolts in us and we cry out: "I don't want it; I would rather die young."

But there are those, on the other hand, who make old age a thing of absolute beauty. I have known them, and since I am being personal today, I shall say that I knew one such in my own mother. When she lay dead upon her bed a friend came in and looked at her. She had a beautiful, tender smile on her lips, and finely chiselled features. She had a lavender chiffon scarf wound around her. This friend looked at her and said, "She looks like a cross between a medieval saint and the Queen of England." That is what one felt. I remember standing with her just a very short time before she died. She was watching some young people play badminton. "You know," she said, "if it weren't for my body I'd be out there playing with them." And she would have been. Keen, eager, interested in everything, full of joy, she did not think that just because

her instrument was failing the sun was failing to shine or the birds were failing to sing. The flowers were not failing to open and human hearts were continuing to be happy and loving, and human affairs were continuing to move on with all the vivid interest that they continued to contain. She knew that these things were just as before. She only wished, with that lovely selfless spirit that was always hers, that her instrument were better able to let her take her part. I am glad to say this of her because she was very beautiful. Her love was never calculated. It flowed out warmly and spontaneously from her heart to all living things. I speak of her not merely because she was my mother but because she was someone whom destiny made it possible for me to know very, very well, and therefore I have the authority to say these things of her. There are many more who also have these same qualities, but I am not equipped to speak of them.

My father, too; I don't exclude him. He was magnanimous to a fault. I never heard him say a hateful or a horrid thing against anybody. Once when all his family was raging against someone who had done him great wrong, he said, "Well, what's all the fuss about? Don't you know that that's just the way he is? That's all!" Once someone to whom he had given a large sum of money squandered it all in mining stock. After the money was gone she wrote to him saying that she was destitute. Everybody said, "Oh, don't help her. You have given her enough to keep her until the end of her days. If she has squandered it, that's her own business." He was an old, old man then. He got up, and sneaking out of the house unseen, went down to the bank and drew out enough money to take care of her, and sent it to her. When the whole family expostulated and remonstrated, he said,

"Well, it has always been my observation that a person is just as hungry whether it is his fault or not."

I am giving this as the inheritance—the spiritual inheritance—that I received, and yet I received it, as I say, from people who were not formally religious people at all. They were *spiritual* people because they were winged people, because they were able to follow their ideals without fear and without favor. Each of you could match my story with your own. Fortunate, we who have known such winged souls. They are the hope of the world!

Also there flashed into my mind somebody far away in time and quite different—Joan of Arc. A little peasant she was, brought up in the fields of France, with no education to speak of, tending her sheep, and with an unfaltering faith—a faith in God, a real faith—in the religious belief in which she was raised, and a faith in France. When her beloved country was beaten down into the sod, she heard the "voices" that commanded her to go forth and save France. Think, if you heard a voice that said, "Go forth and save America," or "Go forth and save the United Nations," how would you feel? What would you do? Who would listen to you? You would have to believe very hard, even to start forth. It was just as hard for her; harder, for at that time the aristocracy that ruled was far beyond the peasantry to which she belonged. But she went forth in complete faith, faith in her voices. We must understand that she was not a blind, stupid instrument; she acquired such military skill that her strategy outsmarted that of the generals around her, and of the enemy. And she was able finally to crown the King in the cathedral at Rheims. Many were the burdens that weighed her down, but she was able to bear them all. When in court where she was being tried for heresy and

her life was at stake, someone asked her, "Joan, why is it that you presumed to place the crown upon the head of the King? Why should your hands have done it?" She replied, "My hands bore the burden; they had earned the right." What a magnificent statement!

My thoughts roam through time and space. They pause by the bedside of Pavlowa, the great dancer. She is dying, she cannot speak, yet her hands go up in the gestures of her famous dance of the dying swan. In her last breath her thought is with this creation, this marvel of rhythm and beauty that had flowed forth from her. She knows she shall never do it again; she knows that the instrument is going, but hers is the living spirit of the dancer, the artist; it is eternal; it can never die.

So many thoughts come to one. I was thinking of Einstein and of something that he said not long ago in an interview when he was questioned about his faith. He said, "I believe in a universal, infinite intelligence." Then he went on in that interview, or some other, to say that when his mind reached a point where a certain wall rose up and he could go no farther with his rationalism, with his deductions, then something in him, beyond the mind, seemed to transcend that wall and bring him the solution he was seeking. In other words, Einstein, perhaps one of the most brilliant intellects that the world has produced, admitted a power in him, a winged power, that could not be confined in any formula, that could not be tabulated, that he could not prove. He said, "I can't prove this thing but it is there." It is this unprovable thing that I think every human being, consciously or unconsciously, is trying to attain—something that lifts his feet, something that gives him heart in the midst of despair, something that makes him undefeatable even in the face of defeat.

When I say undefeatable, I don't mean that he never knows what the world calls defeat; he may know it many times. He may seem to be beaten down into the dust, but while he lies in the dust, his *Winged Spirit* is there, pinioned, yet shining and unconquerable, and he knows it, and his harassed mind rejoices in the knowledge.

When I speak of unselfishness and of self-centeredness, I mean that no really egotistically self-centered person can know the life and the beauty and the passion of the illumined ones of life, whether in the religious or in some other field. When I speak of unselfishness I mean a concern with interests and meanings and livingness beyond the consciousness of our little self. The poet, the musician, even the hewer of wood and the drawer of water who does his work with some tremendous purpose, who is not concerned with his own personal gain and loss, is being not only an unselfish man but a selfless man. This type of consciousness, even when faced with death or disaster or all possible frightening things, is not thinking, how can I save myself; what can I do to protect me? Its heart is going out and uniting itself, not only with others but with great ideas and ideals for which it gladly would give itself as a sacrifice, to see them established and sustained in the minds and hearts of men.

It is a way of living. It is a way of feeling, not just when you go to church or when you meditate, but every moment of your life. It is the transcendent, the joyous spirit. It is the spirit of Socrates who, when he was asked before his death, "How do you want to be buried?" said, "First you must catch me." That is the kind of spirit to have: "First you must catch me." How shall we use you? How shall we defeat you? "First you must catch me." And there are those whom no one can catch. Epicte-

tus was one of those. He was able, even from chains in prison, to speak out his mind in defiance of the whole might of the Roman Empire. Let them put me in chains; let them cut off my head. They can't lay their hands on the way I am thinking and feeling. They can't touch, in other words, the *Winged Spirit* that I am. Upon that One no man can lay his hands.

Man is constantly searching for something to put his feet on, so to speak. No man can live without sensing that there is something in us beyond mere rationalism, something that is beyond time and space and all these things that are like walls hemming us in. We work out our systems of philosophy, and they are helpful, but we are inclined to cut faith completely out of our lives. We don't realize that the thing that distinguishes a human being, that makes him beautiful and brilliant and gay and sometimes Godlike is not measured by the measurements of his body or even by the measurements of his mind. It is measured by that which comes he knows not whence. We cannot always command it; very often we cannot say why we are as we are. Inspiration, power to be and to do, heroism in the face of death, these things come, as Einstein says, flashing down from the heights of eternity into the heart of man, and indicating to man, if he will stop and listen, what he truly is, what he can be. For his life is not in the body; it isn't in the little calculations of the brain that chop the world up in tiny bits, and see only a little piece at a time, unable to bring things together in wholeness. The life of man is in That which transcends himself.

We worry; we distract our minds over the question of immortality. If a man dies shall he live again? There are schools of thought which say there can be no future

life of the personality. Logical men cannot conceive of this little personality going on this way all through an eternity. Neither can the great spiritual beings conceive of that. But we are much more than the personality. We are That which irradiates the personality, which gives it its momentary light and color and meaning. We are the flame within. We are that Being eternal "for which the hour shall never strike."

Take the personality: it has been well built up. Perhaps tremendous forces have been put into it from the past, molded into it to form tendencies that are not easily shaken off. Just as the body is able to retain its shape and form through a number of years of life, so possibly there are subtler forms of matter, and the personality is able to take unto itself a more ethereal body and maintain its differentiation from others for a long period. But in the final end, as Sri Ramakrishna has said: There is in this universe just one Being and one Doer.

Sometimes that floods over one — the glory and the wonder that what brought a solar system into being brought me into being, brought you into being; that what sustains the planets in space, sustains you and me; and what keeps the planets in their courses — that law, that power from some central point in this wonderfully coordinated and organized universe — is also keeping us in our course. We are a part of It, and we must not think of God and creatures, counting them off one by one. We must think of one Infinite Being and realize that we are not chopped up pieces, but that we *are* That. That is our background, our source and our goal. By such thought we open ourselves to the *Winged Spirit,* the Spirit that lifts us clean out of self into the great vast reaches of this wonderful universe, into contact with the Life that is constantly moving in and through all living things.

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human soul lies hidden behind the wall of self-interest, behind the wall of lack of faith, the wall of all the earth-bound elements that shut us into the tomb of ego. Our angel of aspiration, our angel of faith, our angel of hope must needs push that wall aside and allow us to enter our true and native land. That is what we all must do, and the unceasing effort to do so is the life of the spirit. This alone is religion, be it in the church or outside it. How wonderful the power of the human race could be were it but convinced of this ideal: that man is infinitely more than he knows himself to be! Man in his true Being is this pervading Power that has the strength to uphold the universe and yet cannot be seen with the eyes, nor grasped with the hands. Thou art That! Only when man accepts this as his true identity will he lay aside his little self and permit himself to become immersed in the beauty and the wonder and the mystery of the world around him. Only then will he feel his real fellowship with all that exists. Only then will he realize what is meant by equality. He will be able to look upon the birth of a star in the heavens as no more wonderful than the birth of a tiny flower or of a little spider or ant or of a child.

That Supreme Power is ever ready to burst forth into manifestation in our lives. The Kingdom of God is ever at hand. Ours is the task to win our way into this Kingdom by our love, by that selflessness which knows what is alone of real concern to us. What alone should move us is not whether we live or die, not whether we are this or that, but that Truth shall live, that Beauty shall live, and that man's highest ideals shall live, and that all men shall at last lift up their heads and know that happiness that comes, not from circumstance but from the undying, the deathless *Winged Spirit* within.

MOTHER, PURE AND HOLY FIRE

by Sister Daya

Mother, pure and holy Fire,
Burning every false desire
In our soul Thy radiance glows.
None can fear that fire who knows.
It transforms the base and lowly
Into something pure and holy.
Dazzling, glowing, ever healing,
Truth in every heart revealing.

Mother, sacred, cleansing flame,
Softly now, we breathe Thy Name.
On Thine altar Fire we lay
All our burden of the day;
Every worldly thought and yearning,
Joy and sorrow for Thy burning;
In full trust with Thee we leave them;
Bright, transforming Flame, receive them.

Holy offerings rich and rare
Must be then far more than prayer;
All we are or hope to be
Here and now we offer Thee,
Good or ill, yea, all our being,
All our tasting, hearing, seeing,
All we are we lay before Thee;
Oh, consume us, we implore Thee.

All the knowers of sacrifice, burning off their impurities by the performance of sacrifice . . . go to the eternal *Brahman*. O Arjuna, not even this world is for the non-performer of sacrifice; how much less is the other.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

SISTER DAYA

An Intimate Picture

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

It was so very hot the first day of September in 1955. The temperature in the shade was over one hundred degrees. The sun was mercilessly pouring down its scorching rays on the Ashrama grounds; the Brothers' faithful watering could not prevent the lawns from turning brown; the myrtle, lantana and ivy lay dying, and even the manzanita, sumac and mountain sage were burning into crisp tinder.

In one of the Ashrama houses between the Cloister and the guest house Sister Daya lay suffering constant discomfort of the body. Ten days before she had returned from the hospital after a second operation. She was failing fast; no amount of intake of ice water, neither the bedside fan nor the air cooler near her room, seemed to diminish the burning heat within and without her mortal frame. She spoke of the body's having become a prison house, expressed concern over not being able to meditate. Almost with apology she said to me, "Perhaps I should not pray for any favor of the Lord, but oh, if only there could be a little relief from this agonizing body." On several occasions we sang to her her own song:

> Mother, pure and holy Fire,
> Burning every false desire,
> In our soul Thy radiance glows.
> None can fear that fire who knows.

She would lie quietly listening with her eyes closed, looking somewhat relieved. And we prayed every moment that she might be.

However, on this September first, Sister Daya was more a transcendent spirit than a dying person. It was

her birthday and she, out of that abundance of heart, her most natural endowment, was ready to give of herself to all who came near her. Visitors, mostly members of the community and her family, went in and out of her room in a steady stream. On this her birthday she seemed to be less conscious of the body ceaselessly in anguish.

I saw her in the early afternoon; her hospital bed was raised from behind the pillows; her face had grown very thin and her naturally high color was accentuated by fever. Her once long and golden braids which she had worn like a crown over her head, and had remained hidden by her white veil, were now mostly grey and short. They lay bare like a torn garland near her withered neck. Her sky-blue eyes with their slight Chinese slant were as deep a blue as we had ever seen them. They shone with a light that penetrated straight into one's heart and gave out a tenderness which relieved one's feeling of sadness.

I said to her that many had come and gone, bringing her presents. I came not to give but to receive. Would she give me her blessing? As was characteristic of her innate humility, her facial expression changed; she showed shyness and embarrassment. Her remark was how could she bless, she who was not worthy! Then we visited briefly in a mood of exaltation, both speaking of that which lifted our spirit, Sister Daya quoting some lines from Matthew Arnold. My memory falters here; those words of the poem have fled from me.

Swami Paramananda had acquainted me with Sister Daya even before we met. We, Swamiji and I, were crossing the Pacific Ocean together on my first homeward journey to the West, more than a quarter of a century ago. During the five weeks, whenever he allowed me

to visit him in his private stateroom, or as we strolled the deck or at the dining table, again and again her name was on his lips. I could gather from all Swamiji said that Sister Daya was someone he held in high esteem. His description of her personality included many details and anecdotes; he spoke of her multiple talents and praised her character, her devotion, and her unfolded spirituality.

At the Glendale station when the Southern Pacific train (which was carrying us down from San Francisco) pulled in, at least a dozen or more persons from the Ashrama were there to greet us. Some came running toward Swami Paramananda; among them was one with a pair of eyes made single, that took no notice of anything or anyone save one figure. They were like Arjuna's arrows at the scene of the archery tournament, arrows directed straight to the eye of the fish. I watched Sister Daya as she took Swamiji's hand; the tall lady under a blue hat and with a blue cape! Intensity of feeling bespoke her move, her gaze, her hand shake. Then suddenly I heard Swami Paramananda's voice saying, "Daya, aren't you going to greet Gayatri?"

Soon afterwards I called her *Mam* or Mother and since then she has become *Mam* to many, many souls.

In the drawing room of Sister Daya's sister's house in New York there is a life-size portrait of a girl of nine or ten, sitting with a pencil and paper in her hands. She is looking very serious and thoughtful. It is the future Sister Daya. When I first saw it many years ago and expressed appreciation of the work, Sister Daya's mother told me that in her childhood little Georgina was often found dreaming or composing. At such times she would say, "Please don't disturb me. I am writing poetry." The artist had certainly caught her mood.

Throughout her life Sister Daya wrote — poetry or prose, lyrics or songs, jingles or ballads, dramas or essays. Writing needed no effort on her part; it flowed from her like a spring, free and spontaneous. Was someone having a birthday? Was Swamiji launching a festival or did a Christmas celebration need some mirth and foolishness? Sister Daya was always there ready with her wit, her gift of pen and her desire to add merriment and to give happiness. Silly fortunes came out of walnut shells instead of their meat; at the Thanksgiving dinner serious verses adorned the eucalyptus leaves meant to be place cards at table. All were brain children of Sister Daya.

One year in La Crescenta, after the Anniversary dinner, scenes from her *Light of Asia* were given as the entertainment. Sister Daya became the impresario. She had us all working and rehearsing, Swami Paramananda included; she was coaching, prompting, directing. Oh, what fun! We gave a finished performance, almost professional, using the Cloister patio as the setting. One hundred and fifty persons attended it and Swamiji portrayed Buddha most realistically. Thanks to Sister Daya! Crouching behind a bush in order to hide she prompted him with his lines, because it was so easy for Swamiji to forget them and compose and utter his own, and thus throw us all off cue!

One evening Swami Paramananda stood by the lighted fire in the living room, after a strenuous weekend of observing one of his anniversaries. He had cooked dinners for a hundred or more persons, conducted two public Services on Sunday and kept us all moving at merry-go-round speed. He looked weary. Gazing at us who looked fairly wilted, too, he remarked, "Well, if I had not come to this country, you would have all lived in peace." Out

came the response, in the flash of a moment: "Yes, Swamiji, and we would have died in pieces!" — the voice of Sister Daya!

Born as the youngest daughter of a United States senator, reared in reasonable comfort and ease with little or no training for self-service, it was difficult when Georgina Jones, having found her Teacher, left the world behind in order to live a life of dedication and service under his spiritual direction. In a community such as Swami Paramananda was forming there was need for all kinds of talents. Work and worship were one and the same, and no form of labor was mean. One who was qualified to edit the magazine had to be ready to empty the refuse can, stoke the furnace or polish the vessels for the Shrine.

Neither by temperament nor by training was our Sister Daya the type which could be regarded as practical. In those early days in Boston when Swami Paramananda was preparing his devoted band, one by one, for their specific roles of service, Sister Daya was once allowed to cook. The result was not too satisfactory. I heard the story in the midst of peals of laughter: how rice was burned to a crisp and Swamiji never allowed his novice to try her hand again at that task. So great was Sister Daya's zeal to serve in a domestic capacity that she felt hurt and considered this lack of efficiency a definite drawback. The result was that she offered to wash dishes. During the thirty-six years Sister Daya lived either in the Vedanta Centre of Boston or in the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta, much water flowed through her fingers and mostly in the dish pans. As the celebrations were continuous year after year, so the dishes in use were innumerable. Thus she earned the title of "Champion Dishwasher." At the kitchen sink of the Ashrama Cloister the following song had its birth:

When the pots are greasy
And you are feeling cross,
And when life is not so easy
And each one wants to be boss,
Then pull, pull together
With our gaze upon our Lord—
In fair or stormy weather
Brave hearts in one accord.

It was Sister Daya herself who was singing, setting her words to a familiar tune. In no time we, too, were all singing with her. Under her inspiration in the pantry or kitchen, could several hundred pieces of china or silver or even sticky or burned pans hold any horror for the eager helpers? The song continued:

When you've planned an outing
And everyone is late,
That is not time for pouting;
Let it teach you how to wait.
Then pull, pull together . . .

and then the rest of the refrain filled the air with gaiety.

Saints may be great and unusual people but I have in my experience found them to be the most human among all human beings. While Sister Daya's very nature revealed an innate spiritual aristocracy, she never aroused fear or even awe in anyone who came to associate with her closely. Underneath that stately bearing and natural regality were certain traits: a careless freedom from conventionality, an inherent sweeping power to identify herself with all that is common and even beneath it, and a love which accepted the dust and the sky with equal intensity.

Swami Paramananda who spoke of her in private and public as a great soul, also called her his "tramp". I had reason to think that she was the most versatile among his companions who could reach the heights and fathom the depths of his personality. She could always understand, share and encourage his dreaming. Sister Daya

dressed in a ragged habit, dirty canvas shoes and a shabby hat, would accompany him on his hiking excursion to Oak Canyon (part of the Ashrama's undeveloped property) where lay one of the sources of our water supply; or she would return looking shabbier and covered with brush or ticks after a trip to the Quail Canyon, where she and Swamiji had been building their castles in the air: a new Ashrama, a better and a more beautiful one, or one in Honolulu or Malaya or India, and so on. He looked immaculate in spite of mountain climbing and fatigue and she the opposite, but her face always shone with the light of sheer gladness and enjoyment as she related their outing, adding her sparkle of humor to the small events. She shared Swami Paramananda's great love for his mountain retreat in La Crescenta, his dream child. It was Sister Daya who had been instrumental in his finding the beautiful place. She had been with him from the beginning and steadily throughout the hardships and struggles of its days of pioneering.

Sister herself was of America's pioneer stock, hardy, enduring and strong. Her people had crossed the continent in a covered wagon; her father had been a well-known figure in those early days of gold rush and speculation. He was the donor to the State of California of the large tract of land facing the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica. The pioneer's blood in Sister Daya's veins mingled with love of nature, and endowed her with a spirit of adventure. Always she was ready to go somewhere; from surface observation she would appear as an extrovert, but at heart she was a great devotee and a real mystic. Despite her mature years she could become a little girl. At the seashore, with her head thrown back in excitement and glee, she would run to meet the high waves, or spend hours gathering sea shells of many

shapes or hues, or pile up multiferious rocks in the trunk of her car and bring them home with the utmost care as if they were her many children. On those occasions she would live in timelessness and often return home late for her scheduled assignment, somewhat rushed and conscience stricken.

It seemed that her lack of domestic talents found compensation in her own mind and heart through her making of herself a doer of errands. In the *Goblin Army Song* she wrote a verse for herself:

> Sister Daya is no loafer for she has to be the chauffer,
> For she drives the Sisters round and round the block.

Sister Daya would be out most of the day taking the Sisters to market, seeing sick friends or doing some service for them—perhaps finding a home for a kitten or taking a sick cat to the veterinarian—or meeting social obligations. When the duties at home would suffer under her over-loaded program of appointments or through her inability to say "No" to someone who was making unfair demands on her time and strength, she would be at work during the night, the light burning into the wee hours of the morning while she would read and edit addresses or write for the forthcoming issue of the *Message of the East.*

Her energy was boundless—physical, mental and spiritual—for she could rise again in the early dawn to prepare the Shrine for worship or to arrange flowers in the Temple. The secret of her strength lay in ceaseless giving, and always completely without a thought of the body or the self. Also her power of relaxation was almost childlike. She could lie down half an hour before a scheduled Service or Class, take a nap, rise, dress and walk up to the platform looking fresh and serene, and deliver an inspiring talk. Often during the recent years when she

drove Sister Achala to her weekly marketing duty, Sister Daya would be found sitting behind the wheel of the car (parked at the curb) blissfully asleep.

That Sister Daya was transfigured on the platform again and again when she conducted Services has been testified by countless persons who have come to hear her. Scholarship was as natural a gift as inspiration. She would be lifted out of herself or carried upward by the magic of That of which she spoke. She would look so very young, every line erased from her face, radiant, glowing with that inner light which lends transparency to a person's being. Her prodigious memory overflowed in recitation of poetry or Scripture or philosophic texts and in stories of personal experiences in their minutest detail. Eloquence and wisdom, inspiration and enlightenment, unfailing though they were and always at her disposal, never under any conditions aroused her ego or a sense of self-importance. Because this sacred task of teaching had not been of her own choice, rather a command she had been following in obedience to her Teacher, it could never make her vain or proud.

Humility and humanity, compassion and love, had so charged Sister Daya's life that in her one recognized a fullness which had no limit. Everything about her person had become big. She could never stoop to any act that was small or petty. She could forgive and suffer but never strike back. Again and again she quoted Lord Buddha's injunction, "What most is needed is a loving heart," or would say, "There cannot be too much love in the world."

Her love was for all, but especially she wanted to give it to the world's unloved ones. They might be human beings, cats, dogs or birds, Sister Daya could feel for all.

She loved life, too, and was always alive with interest. Her zest and passion for it made her a little reluctant yet to leave the beauty and warmth of this world, although death held no fear for her. Is she really gone from us? No, only the physical presence eludes our vision. Within our heart is the living person, held, loved and remembered from moment to moment. The joy and sorrow we have shared, the disciplines and indulgences, our communions and comradeship, the common aspirations and aims were all for that life that takes us beyond this earth. The one who had gone ahead of her now speaks into our soul's ears:

Live and love!
Love and live!
Where love reigns death can never be.
Love is mother of both joy and peace;
From that heart where love always lives
peace and joy will never part.

I am He that teacheth man knowledge; and I bestow on little children a clearer understanding than can be taught by man. He to whom I speak, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in the Spirit. Woe be to them that inquire many curious things of men, and take small care about the ways of serving Me! —*Imitation of Christ*

Hurt to the very depths
I walked alone
Through some sweet canyon place.
Birds sang an undertone,
Yet life seemed stripped of grace—
I could not understand—
And then a leaf outstretched
Caressed my face—
God touched me with His hand.

—*Sister Daya*

TO GINA

by Roy Jones

(A poem written to Sister Daya by her brother)

With the greatest of agility
She'll fight a forest fire
Or with the same facility
She'll warble in the choir.
She'll scrutinize investments
And when to sell determine,
Or clad in snowy vestments
She will preach a moving sermon.

If anybody needs a play
She'll write her one in verse
And she is ready any day
To help the cast rehearse.
She has an innocence of face
Like paintings done by Greuze
But in a car she'll set a pace
That proves she's a chauffeuse.

Her disposition's sweet and calm,
Her nature bright and sunny.
She equally can sing a psalm
Or laugh at something funny.
Her bright blue eyes with mirth will shine
When she says something witty,
Or with a tenderness divine
Will beam in love and pity.

Whatever role she has to play
She does it with ability.
She is the one who put, they say,
The verse in versatility.

She loved life, too, and was always alive with interest. Her zest and passion for it made her a little reluctant yet to leave the beauty and warmth of this world, although death held no fear for her. Is she really gone from us? No, only the physical presence eludes our vision. Within our heart is the living person, held, loved and remembered from moment to moment. The joy and sorrow we have shared, the disciplines and indulgences, our communions and comradeship, the common aspirations and aims were all for that life that takes us beyond this earth. The one who had gone ahead of her now speaks into our soul's ears:

Live and love!
Love and live!
Where love reigns death can never be.
Love is mother of both joy and peace;
From that heart where love always lives
peace and joy will never part.

I am He that teacheth man knowledge; and I bestow on little children a clearer understanding than can be taught by man. He to whom I speak, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in the Spirit. Woe be to them that inquire many curious things of men, and take small care about the ways of serving Me! —*Imitation of Christ*

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VEDANTA ON THE AIR

Broadcasts

by Sister Daya

I

Sister Daya: My friends, several thousand years ago a Vedic seer intoned these words: "Hear ye, ye children of immortal bliss: in my meditations I have beheld that eternal One, sunlike in His glory. Knowing Him, man escapes from the mouth of death. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way." The seer who chanted this had attained Vedanta, the final goal of wisdom or union with the one Supreme, and he had attained it through the practice of yoga. Yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning union. It also is related to the root word, to yoke, as one would yoke oxen. The two words taken together indicate both the means and the goal of the yoga system, absolute control of the whole human instrument and union with God. It is a system based completely on the gradual control of the little personal self by the greater, the immortal Self. Its methods are largely psychological and subjective, not only in regard to man's own inner conflicts, but also in regard to his outer activities and relationships. There are, however, certain physical requirements as to eating, sleeping, posture, etc., and in one of the paths of yoga, certain forms of breath control are given.

Educators everywhere hold character and self-control to be essential to the right development of the human mind and spirit. School book maxims remind us of this from our childhood. Too often, however, they remain for us just maxims, and we remain immature human beings. Even among the more developed types, we often find that

their efforts go only so far and no farther. They reach the moral plane but not the spiritual, and without at least some realization of the eternal Spirit as the true Self in man, we cannot attain that altitude, that height of consciousness from which real control is possible. To try to control the personal self by the personal will alone is like trying to lift oneself by one's own bootstraps. The mind must be conquered and made obedient to the higher Self, for only thus can it be set free. Sri Ramakrishna says, "When the mind is bound, we are bound; when the mind is free, we are free."

But how can we liberate the mind when we are completely involved in its workings and know nothing beyond or above it? In fact, we have so identified ourselves with the mind that we think we are the mind. The Vedanta philosophy teaches that the infinite Spirit is beyond mind and speech; therefore, the true follower of yoga looks upon the mind as his instrument. The very expression, "control of mind," implies something higher than mind that does the controlling. Therefore it is said, let a man learn to control the modifications of his thinking principle. This is given as the initial rule in yoga, which brings us at once to the practice of concentration. A man must learn to gather up his mind and direct it to whatever object he chooses; also he must learn to hold it there without wavering till it becomes one-pointed like a searchlight. We shall soon find that this is one of the most difficult things in the world to do, and one of the most rewarding. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* the hero, Arjuna, says to his spiritual master, Sri Krishna, "Verily, I consider this mind as difficult to control as the wind." And Sri Krishna replies, "It is true, the mind is difficult to control, but through perseverance and dispassion it can

be conquered." Let anyone sit still, choose some subject for concentration and seek to hold the mind steadily upon it. He will soon find his thoughts wandering in every direction. If he collects them and starts over again, the same thing occurs. The trouble is, many past lives of inertia, of scattered thinking, of yielding to outer desires have so weakened the mind that it has become a slave of its own fancies, and is pulled hither and thither by every passing thought and emotion. It must be reoriented, it must learn to move inward toward Truth or God, rather than outward toward the world with its thousand voices. Only in this way will it acquire balance and steadiness, and be able to remain poised in the face of pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat. The *Gita* tells us that the mind which yields to the uncontrolled and wandering senses carries away a man's wisdom, just as a boat on water is carried away by the wind.

We all admit that control of the mind is needful, and we practice it up to a certain point according to our development. Yet we lie awake at night hagridden by thoughts of worry; we allow our mental peace to be disturbed by anger and impatience, envy, fear and countless frustrations, and too often are captured and led away by our desires. There is only one cure for all this: a re-direction of our whole being toward that indwelling Reality, our true Self which lies beyond these outer conflicts. For this purpose the full power of the mind is needed, for the mind when it is coordinated, unified and made one-pointed can break through all obstructions, overcome all obstacles, and find access everywhere even into the holy of holies, the inward Shrine of the Spirit. Swami Paramananda tells us that the main idea of concentration is to make ourselves a channel so clear, direct and unbiased,

that through our instrumentality the power of Divinity can flow and accomplish its great end. "Nothing," he says, "can overcome us when our mind rests firmly in holiness, purity and love."

Intensity in concentration leads to the next step on the path—meditation. Meditation has been compared to pouring oil from one vessel into another. Through unbroken meditation upon an exalted ideal, a man becomes one with that ideal. Unfortunately in ten short minutes it is impossible to enlarge upon this great subject, but one can see that the whole system of yoga revolves around the control of the mind and its right direction. People approach this problem of mind control from one angle or another according to their type and temperament. Thus yoga is divided into different paths to suit these varying needs, each path leading to the same great goal of union with the Supreme. For the active man who has to express himself through service, there is the path of *karma yoga* or union through consecrated action. For the philosophic type there is the path of *jnana yoga* or union through wisdom. For the introspective there is *raja yoga* or union through control of the subtle forces of the body, and for the natural devotee and worshipper there is *bhakti yoga* or union through selfless devotion. By means of these paths a man uses his inborn tendencies to lift him into the serene heights of his own being. Thus the man of action, the *karma yogin*, makes all his acts an offering to the highest, gives without asking anything in return. The *jnana yogin*, the man of philosophic mind, through meditation, learns to discriminate between the real and the unreal, and establishes his consciousness at such a high point that he is able to move among the objects of the world free from desire, equal-minded amid all conditions.

The *raja yogin* by means of meditation, awakens certain subtle centers in his body, corresponding to the higher levels of consciousness, and by means of this attains a state of *samadhi* or divine illumination. The devotee or *bhakti yogin,* through supreme love and devotion for the master and for the Lord, is freed from all self-seeking, and is ultimately merged with the object of his worship.

Do not make the mistake of thinking of these different yogas as unique paths entirely separate from one another. Every path implies all the other paths. It is a question of accent, of emphasis, that is all. Sri Ramakrishna was a master *yogin* in whom all paths found equal expression and true balance. He has, however, stated that in this day and age, the path of *bhakti* or devotion is the best path to follow, and leads just as surely to final union. "*Seva, seva, seva*—service, service, service," he tells us, "is the way to liberation."

Next Saturday I shall attempt to outline these paths of yoga in more detail, and show how they may be interrelated with our daily life and living. In the meantime let us take to heart and put into practice the prayer of Santa Teresa of Avila, the great Spanish saint:

Let nothing disturb thee,
Let nothing affright thee;
All passeth away,
God only shall stay.
Patience wins all;
Who hath God lacketh nothing,
For God is his all.

II

Sister Daya: My friends, last Saturday we defined the word yoga. Today we come to another definition, in fact two definitions, not of the word but of yoga itself in its practical application. We read in the *Bhagavad-*

Gita, "Abandoning attachment and regarding success and failure alike, be steadfast in yoga and perform thy duties. Even-mindedness is called yoga. Being possessed with this understanding, one frees oneself even in this life. Therefore engage thyself in this yoga. Skillfulness in action is called yoga." We have seen that it is needful for the mind to be still, not pulled hither and thither by fancies and desires, and also to be free of egotistic tendencies in order that it may reflect without distortion the clear light of Truth. Once we grasp this fact, we shall understand more easily why equal-mindedness is called yoga. One who is not of equal mind, who twists and turns like a weather cock in response to the varying winds of opinions, circumstances or desire, can no more attain vision of great Truth than an astronomer can gain accurate sight of a planet if his telescope is on a shifting base, not correctly focused and subject to constant vibration. Man's mind can be just as truly an instrument of vision as is the telescope; but whereas the telescope is directed outward toward some object in the heavens, the mind, when set on Truth, is directed inward toward infinite Reality. You may remember the endless time and patience which went into the preparation of the great solar telescope now at the Palomar Observatory. It was polished for I do not know how many years. No weight of dust was allowed to settle on its pure surface. It was protected, so far as was possible, from even the least tremor, lest its perfection be marred. The result was an instrument that can penetrate the depths of space in a way hitherto undreamed of. This preparation and care seemed reasonable to us. But how about that subtler and far more important instrument, the mind? When we are told that equal-mindedness is absolutely necessary for

true vision, how seriously do we take that statement in regard to ourselves? We want the calm, the power, the happiness that inward vision might bring, but are we willing to polish the mind for years if needful in order to prevent the least dust of desire from settling upon it? Are we ready to protect it from the shocks due to our emotional and egotistic reactions? You may say, "We have tried, but without success." The reason is that this inner stillness cannot be achieved through mere human calculation. There is only one Power that can make it possible, the divine Power in man. "Be still and know that I am God," or know that I am God, and you *will* be still. That is the secret. Over the entrance of our shrine at the Ananda Ashrama are these words, "Where I am there is peace."

Gradually as we turn our gaze toward the ineffable One, the light of the eternal Presence or the one Self floods the mind, and we begin to see that all things and all beings, whether they know it or not, are infilled and sustained by that Light, are but expressions of that Self. "He who perceives all beings as the Self, for him how can there be delusion or grief, when he sees this oneness everywhere?" So runs a great Hindu scripture. The true *yogin* beholds that oneness. He no longer swings between the conflicting forces of life, but with his consciousness fixed in the eternal, he looks upon them from above as a witness. The telescope of his mind has become well based, steady; the lens is kept clear by the centering of the thoughts in Truth, and thus is impervious to the shocks of life. When the disciples of Christ found themselves far out in their small boat in the midst of a raging storm, Christ came to them walking on the waters, and stilled the waves so that they were able to bring the boat safely to

port. Try carrying this picture with you in relation to your own mind. When mental storms come and waves of turbulent thoughts seek to overwhelm you, see Him, the Christ, the ideal in the form nearest and dearest to you, walking over the angry waters, stilling them so that you can sail safely into the harbor of peace. Use your imagination in this way constructively till you become established in the unshakeable consciousness of ever-present Divinity. The Roman philosopher, Seneca, said, "If you see a man unterrified in the midst of dangers, untouched by desires, happy in adversity, peaceful amid the storm, will you not say a divine Power has descended upon that man?" We may say more; we may say, there is a master *yogin*.

Let us now consider the second definition of yoga—skillfulness in action. What does this suggest to you? You may say, extreme proficiency in whatever one undertakes, the precise touch of the master workman. True, but what state of mind produces this masterly touch? Think well. Is it not the concentrated, dedicated state? If we observe we shall find that it is only when our purpose is kept absolutely free of all extraneous desires that the whole force of our being can be poured into the task at hand. The truly great artist is great because he works for nothing but perfection in his art. Any lesser thought, any desire for money, or name, or fame would mean a leakage of power. That is why there are many who approach greatness, but few indeed who achieve it. Now let us apply these ideas to yoga. Here the goal is not limited, but is no less than union with Godhead. Everything, therefore, that the *yogin* does must bear the mark of complete consecration. There can be no half-hearted effort, no partial giving, no thought of any return to the little self

in the form of divine benefit or earthly reward. The little self must be offered along with all its works, so that there is no little self left to receive a reward. Only in this way can the motive be made so pure that the mind can pierce through the veil of ignorance and separateness, right into the heart of Truth. Swami Vivekananda wrote, "O lover, give, give; give all you have and all you are; give without any thought of return. He who looks for return, his whole ocean of giving dwindles to a drop." In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we read, "To work alone thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof." This does not mean that there will be no fruits, but only that we should not make them our objective.

In all our activities we are either moving outward toward the world or inward toward God. When we work for results, be they good or ill, then we are bound to those results and to their consequences. Thus we forge the chains of karma and must come into birth again to reap that karma, the results of our past deeds. When, however, we work wholly for God—Truth—then we bind ourselves back to God, and leave the results in the divine keeping. In this way we are freed from karmic results and from rebirth. The very word religion comes from the Latin *religio* which means to bind back. The true renunciation is not of outer possessions, but of inner attachments and all that binds the soul away from God. Think what freedom this gives. One who has dedicated his mind and heart to the one Beloved, who has renounced all desire for the fruits of action, does not agonize over every important decision, does not go over it again and again with the thought that perhaps he should have decided the other way. He gives the best that is in him to the original choice, and then leaves the result with God.

Practice this and see what peace and freedom it will give.

No matter which path of yoga a man may follow, the inner requirements are the same and the goal of union is the same. Only with the *jnana yogin* or philosopher, it is his meditation that he dedicates; the man of action or *karma yogin* offers his actions; the *raja yogin* his inward powers, while the devotee or *bhakti yogin* offers his entire life and being as an oblation at the feet of his Lord. No doubt you are thinking, "This is beyond my power." How do you know? Lao-tze, the great Chinese master, says that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. And Swami Paramananda writes, "Through unselfish work the heart becomes pure, and in pure heart remains nothing but love. Love, unbounded love, that love comes like a flood and sweeps away everything. Anything that is earthly finds no room in that heart; sorrow, pain, misery, jealousy, hatred and whatever is worldly can no more exist there. That is what I understand as divine Love. This is the only thing I understand and take as religion."

As a closing thought let us take to heart these words also of Swami Paramananda:

> Ye who love and serve without thought of self
> are blessed.
> Ye who give your all and seek no gain
> are blessed again and evermore.
> For what shrine more holy than the selfless heart?
> What offering richer than the gift
> that asketh no return?

There is but one Teacher, one Saviour, one Poet, one Artist. There is no illusion that does not owe its glamor to Him, no reality that does not owe its truth to Him. He is the "Silence of secrets;" He is the "Wisdom of the wise." He binds and He makes free. —*Sister Daya*

TO SISTER DAYA

by Dorothy Hanson

In Her I have known
Majestic mountains
Aflame with the sunset;
Beauty of gentians!
Blue spires by the brook;
Late peaceful meadows
Where long shadow fingers
Brush care from the spirit
Brow. In Her were met
Vast purple oceans
That circle earth's islands;
Tender-eyed wood doe
Caressing her fawn;
Bluebird that nestles
Her young under feathers
Softer than blankets
Of pure eider down;
Golden acacia blooms
Through which ecstatic
Bits of blue heaven
Beckon and smile;
Boundless compassion
Of God's star-flung spaces
Where Christus and Buddha
Mingle as one.

Blessed are we
Who have shared
Her abundance,
Chosen Her children,
Warmed by the sun
Of Her gracious spirit.

She has not left us.
Her joy and compassion
With fresh, vital beauty
Each day's journey endow.

Never a past tense
Defines Sister Daya—
Always a present
A glorious Now.

THE DISCIPLE

The Divine Mother who dwells in all living beings in the form of Memory,
We bow down to that Mother again and again and again.
—*Litany to the Divine Mother*

With the passing of the "Disciple" her *Notebook* must of necessity come to a close. Indeed it soon would have done so in any case, for only another page or two of her scattered notes remained to be prepared for publication. She strove, in this record of Swami Paramananda's teachings, to reveal to her readers the real essence of her Master's being, the essential heart of his message. In so doing she laid bare her own heart. She was always the disciple. Again and again she would repeat the Swami's words to her: "I want you to be the perfect disciple."

Although many, many hearts turned to her for direction, for inspiration and for the blessing of her unbounded love, never for one moment did she consider herself in any way a teacher. She spoke from the platform not because she desired to do so or felt herself capable of expressing the Ideal to which she had given her life, but simply because her Teacher had given it to her to do; because he had, she always knew she would be sustained. In her most exalted states when she poured forth her depth of understanding wisdom, always there was the garment of humility that covered her greatness. After making some profoundly stirring statement of Truth as it was realized in her own being, she would add quietly, "Or so it seems to me."

As this little memoir is being written it is the eighth of September and the lesson for the day in Swami's *Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers* reads as follows:

Try to cultivate the true spirit of discipleship. The

world is so full of teachers—everyone wants to be a Master; but the spirit of discipleship is indeed very rare. But going through the form of discipleship is not everything. You must stir yourself up. You must never go to sleep; it is too hard to awaken oneself.

Ever awake, she was one of the rare ones possessed of the true spirit of discipleship. One of her favorite quotations was: "How can I be so small who am so great? How can I be great who am so small?" Though she often quoted this in her Services, only once does this child of hers ever remember her giving any intimation at all that she knew her own real stature. She came forth from the Shrine one day after the noon worship radiating divinity, and she spoke words to this effect: No one really knows me. The greater part of me, the real part is hidden, covered over by what you see.

" 'Beneath the Guru's holy feet I humbly take my place,' make that your motto," she would say. The following poem, called "A Memory," is one of her own that was very sacred to her: in it she had to some little degree caught and preserved the depth of her own feeling for him who was sent of God to lead her unto Him:

There's a memory like a jewel
Of a room built round an altar
Shining with a golden background
Upon which is traced the lotus—
Full-blown, thousand-petaled lotus
On whose heart the *Word* is written.
The Best Support, the Highest Support,
That Word is indeed Brahman.

On the altar step a ruby
Flames perpetual adoration
To the Universal Mother.
A faint line of incense circles,
Floating like a fluttering ribbon,
Filming altar lights and flowers—

tense, but with reference to Sister Daya it is not fitting. I can truly speak of her in the present because I know she is with us now as always. Her sermons have been preserved and I know that I shall be able to read them again and again in the *Message of the East.*

Dick Whittemore, No. Brewer, Maine

Esteemed Daya Devi, as I judge from her writings, was an exceptionally high soul. Her ideal of service was selfless and an example to many of us. We grieve over her demise and pray that her soul will rest in peace in the region of eternal light and will be a help to many more.

Hari Prasad Shastri, London, England

You bring to my heart so clearly what a gap Sister Daya's passing has left at the Ashrama. Her personality was so vital, so vibrant. When she entered the room the atmosphere took on new life—conversation became lively and laughter became more frequent. She seemed to carry with her wherever she went a well-spring of good cheer and optimism. None can take her place.

Sister Daya will remain forever in our memories as a most gallant soul. I shall—we all shall—meet suffering more bravely, if it comes, for having been the companion of her undaunted spirit in her time of trial; for having seen with our own eyes how one who lives constantly, not merely in time but in eternity, meets death. It has been an awesome and inspiring privilege.

Esther Orlander, Apple Valley, Calif.

How like her to have thought of me and to have asked you to write. The world will be a poorer place for me and for many others now that she is gone, though I never entertained the hope of seeing her again. There is no need for me to stress her saintly qualities which she combined with so good an intellect and such delicious sense of humor. She was a tremendous factor in my life and taught me so much.

L. Conway Evans, Maida Vale, England

Sister always personified love in its wholeness as well as the many facets which contributed to that wholeness. My life and awareness have been deeply influenced by having had the privilege of knowing her—a great soul.

Virginia Kellog, San Francisco, Calif.

Sister Daya's passing on was a great loss. But she has left us with so many wonderful memories and a strong faith that we can all be grateful for each moment that God gave us with her. In truth she has not really left us because her teachings and spirit will live on and on.

Richard H. Smith, Manhattan Beach, Calif.

It will be difficult to imagine the Ashrama without that gracious, loving presence, so wise, so well-poised and withal so humble in that divine form of humility, so gifted with the savor of common sense, so uncommon, and what merry humor! But her spirit will bless the Ashrama as did Swami Paramananda's.

Ruth Benedict, Claremont, Calif.

Her expression on this earth has been inspiration which has lifted everyone who had the good fortune to come within her life; as motivated by the radiation of her teaching. I am thankful for having had that experience.

Eudoxie Hall Bathey, Solvang, Calif.

She was a great and beautiful soul and I shall feel eternally grateful for having known her at a time of much perplexity for me. Her peace and serenity, her wisdom and her balance, her knowledge and insight, her spirit—they all gave me much which I shall never forget.

Florence Pope Sanders

Sister Daya meant so very much to me. She seemed like a mother, an earthly symbol of our Divine Mother and she held aloft the bright lamp which Swamiji lit in all our hearts.

Charles Murray, Norwood, Ohio

When, upon my arrival in Frankfurt on 23rd inst., I read Mr. Swain's letter about the passing on of Sister Daya, it seemed to me as if I would suffer from a blackout. I could not understand the essence of the message until my eyes caught the sentence: "Gayatri Devi held the last services for her." It is entirely beyond my ability to imagine what you went through on that fateful day of 3rd September 1955.

I deeply regret having not had the privilege of meeting Sister Daya in this life, but having read a great number of her articles in the *Message of the East,* I feel as if my own sister had passed away. From all that I have read by her and about her, I can form an idea how valuable her work and her life have been.

Alexander Rosenwald, Schwetzingen, Germany

Her contribution, as she passed this way, has been to inspire and uplift—she spoke to the highest and best in all who listened to her teaching. We know this is a source of joy and peace as she now transfers her activities to another field of life's infinite experiences.

Gene Sande, New Age Bible Center, Santa Monica, Calif.

I was so glad that I could see her so shortly before her departure,

and if it was a farewell, it was said with the certainty that neither time nor space can ever separate us.

Not only have I lost a very dear, personal friend, but also the Ashrama has lost one of the pillars on which it rested. Daya took a vital part in the shaping of it; her generous spirit has drawn to it many friends, her inspired talks have lifted many a soul, and she has stood by your side as a true Sister to carry on the Swami's work.

Charlotte Miles, Alamos, Mexico

A great soul, and God must be saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." I feel a great personal loss in that I had always looked so forward to going to the Ashrama in La Crescenta and seeing her in that setting. However, I have gone there in mind many, many times and I can catch the beauty of her there in mind as I have done for so long even if I will never see her there in person.

Frances Post, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

She was and is a gracious and lovely soul and I hope it is my good fortune to meet her somewhere, somehow.

I imagine she is having lots of fun; can't imagine her being long-faced and solemn, probably finding a stray baby Angel or kitty.

Jennie Raymond, Boston, Mass.

We will, however, always remember her as we last saw her. She was a wonderful person and always made one feel so happy to be in her presence. I don't think that she ever frowned on anyone or anything because she had such a lovely smile all the time. We will miss her greatly, but know that she must have gone on to something much better.

Alice Clark, Newton, Mass.

As I gradually think beyond the sense of my personal sorrow and loss, I realize that life at the Ashrama, for all of you who have been so closely connected with her in her great labour of love and worship, will be difficult and your sense of loss will be far greater in the day to day existence than will mine who have lived apart from her so many years. Still her spirit, even more living, will be with you in that beautiful Ashrama that she helped to conceive and bring into being.

I did have a unique relationship with Daya, one of very long standing and one that saw a great change in her life. I saw her become inwardly a real *sannyasin.* She has always had a holy influence over me, and though, for the present, I feel great loss, I know that she has gone on to a wonderful life rewarding her for all her unselfish service throughout these many years.

Her example will shine forth for all of you all the time and prosper the work that has been so lovingly dedicated by Swami and so faithfully carried out by our beloved Sister Daya.

Beth Jewitt PawTun, Alexandria, Va.

I believe I have told you before that Sister Daya was the greatest influence for good I had ever known in my life.

Twice in the Temple, while Sister Daya was talking at the Thursday evening classes, I seemed to see her surrounded and almost merged with this magnificent white light and then her face looked like a beautiful girl about 17 years old. I didn't tell her the first time, but second. She said others had told her that too. I don't understand it, but the experience caused my spirit to feel uplifted and light.

Catherine Holt, Los Angeles, Calif.

Her living experience of *That* which sustains and is the source of all there is, was a consistent expression of her mind—motivated from Divine love. Words are so inadequate to express that which is felt in the heart for our blessed Sister Daya.

Margaret Hauts, San Francisco, Calif.

Adieu! Thou most beloved teacher and good friend! Thy task completed! So well met. Swift as the winged Dove. Thy wings outstretched. Thou hast soared to greater heights . . . There with thy greater knowing, see clear and bright the realms of Spirit.

Thy human form, so well remembered was like some great lighted candle, brightening the dark windows of those who had lost their way. The seeds of strength and hope that thou hast scattered . . . o'er the paths of many are pearls of wisdom! They shall grow like giant trees within the hearts of all who love thee.

What human words could e'er express the love for one who truly touched the stars? That left behind the glittering dust that sparkles on our path . . . Adieu!

Om! Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

Glory Raye, Laguna Beach, Calif.

It was the last time Sister Daya and I saw each other and in that hour I saw the majesty of a great soul rise almost free of the limitations of the physical body. As it waited, poised like a bird on a tree branch, ready for flight, I was lifted up by its strength and caught a glimpse of the Limitless into which it was going . . .

She sat in a chair by the opened west window where the light of the sunset-tinted sky fell upon her face. She told me . . . of her

illness but she added, "I conserve my strength whenever possible, but the moment I begin to conduct a service the wonderful strength to do it is given me and I am unaware of any pain or discomfort. I am lifted up above any personal feeling by the Lord. It is wonderful just to witness that. I know I shall be able to serve so long as I am needed . . ."

The sentence faded into the evening sounds of birds calling and the gentle rustle of leaves in the breeze. Her white veil fell back from her face and I saw a radiant beauty in her face that made her seem young and almost like pure spirit so strongly did it glow through the thin physical veil still clinging to it.

I told her of the day when I was nineteen and I saw her crossing the grassy parkway near the West Adams residence in the rain. It was a spring rain with rifted clouds letting sunlight through. She was in her dark blue habit and as she walked in her tall, free-moving manner, she lifted her rain-wet, joyous face to the sky, and she became a symbol of the tie between heaven and earth. She was a part of both the storm and the sunlight. *She lifted her face to the beat of the rain,* and smiled as it touched her—because rain and sunlight were both caress to one who knew the *Oneness of All.*

How many times in the years after that when there were storms in my life did I surmount them by remembering to "lift my face to the rain," as she had showed me that day! . . .

Laurel E. Keynan, Denver, Colo.

CANDLE OF DIVINITY

A tall white pillar of the Universal Temple, thou;
A Candle of Divinity, transmuting earth's dark substance
Into living radiance to glorify man's world.
Vast majesties of nature and of man and God
Have found their home within the wide compassion of thy heart.
Thou dost lift our souls into the gleaming certainty of Light!

Ruth Harwood

Sometimes, just before the Wheel of Life begins its descent, there comes an exquisite moment; an experience, perhaps, the intimate and beautiful memory of which remains through life to brighten and alleviate the darkness to follow. Everyone who ever knew Sister Daya has such a memory; some have many.

It was on May 26, Thursday, that Sister Daya called me from Madeleine Goss's lovely home in the Duarte foothills, and asked me to spend the day with her. She was there for a rest.

The day was one spent in Paradise, filled as it was with singing birds, a short walk on a mountain trail, lovely flowers, peace, beauty—and Sister Daya. With what eager interest she watched

the long travel of a caterpillar as it crossed the terrace and climbed the wall; and how we laughed to see a baby duck following the gardener's little son past the swimming pool and through the garden! Little, human things. Also great thoughts. As we rested on the terrace before lunch, Sister Daya read aloud from a book called, *Among the Great*. Afterwards she read again. Some of the transcripts of Swami's talks. Trying to choose which one to use for the next issue of the *Message*. The hours were filled with a divine joy, a bliss, that comes with the company of the holy.

In the short weeks remaining, she carried the Sunday services as usual. No one could have suspected the gravity of her illness, so serene and benign was she. Her spirit was like a white flame, and as she talked the years fell away and she seemed like a transcendent spirit. On one occasion she spoke on *Spiritual Heroism* and she was the living embodiment of her subject.

Those into whose lives she is forever woven would be inconsolable if they did not know, in deep surety, that only her physical garment is gone. That her vital, joyful, compassionate and loving spirit still serves with her Lord, melting away sadness and grief and filling our hearts with peace and bliss.

Evelyn MacMinn, Pasadena, Calif.

TO SISTER DAYA

Late in the autumn of thy mortal life
we met thee, when the Giver of seasons
had silvered thy hair with touch of frost.
"Compassion" thou wast called —
aye, but we name thee "Youth"!
For youth exulted in all thy movements
and rang in thy gentle laughter,
and with freshness unfreighted of time
thy lively spirit embraced all things.
Ever tenderly didst thou pour thyself out,
the fullness of thy years belied,
youth's inmost secret found,
in love.

Great Sister-Heart, in whate'er mansion
of the Father's house thou dwellest now,
from realm of mortal sense removed,
thou remainst yet with us to show
how age's advance was stayed
and death undone.

David and Marita Grindell, Boston, Mass.

THE STROKE OF GRACE*

by Sister Daya

(To Sri Ramakrishna—at whose touch ego must die.)

The impotent teacher, he that hath in him no stamina, he, verily, is like unto the impotent water-snake, who when he seizeth a large frog surely createth his own miseries and prolongeth also the agonies of the frog which he can neither swallow nor eject. How can he point out the way truly, he that hath not found it himself?

But the good teacher, the true and potent guide, is like unto the deadly cobra, the king of snakes. And when he taketh a pupil in hand, he verily stilleth the tumults of his soul at once; even as the cobra seizeth the frog and silenceth his croakings at one stroke. —*Sri Ramakrishna*

I have been stung by the Cobra of Eternity,
And "I" must die!
Darkly its vast hood curves over me
Like the night sky.
Its endless, unseen coils—
Winding and unwinding—
On every side encircle me—
Binding and unbinding—
Even as the horizon rings the sea.
From blind, black space, Its eyes—
Breath-stealing, death-dealing—
I feel are ever watching me.
From Its great stroke of grace
There is no hiding-place,
Nor would I be set free:
I neither move nor cry.
I have been stung by the Cobra of Eternity,
For this wound there is no healing—
"I" must die!

There is never any peace for those who resist God.
— *Fenelon*

*Reprinted from the *Message of the East*, Vol. 25

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE, ANANDA ASHRAMA
COHASSET AND BOSTON, MASS.

The last three months have been a real test of faith and endurance for the Vedanta Centre which has carried on its usual program of activities during Srimati Gayatri Devi's absence in California. Various members have taken turns in conducting the Sunday Services which have been held uninterruptedly in Cohasset, and the Wednesday evening class at the Chapel in Boston.

The most memorable of events was the Service conducted in Cohasset honoring Miss Nora Shaw after her passing on September 25th. This aged and saintly woman, a member of the Vedanta Centre for more than twenty-five years, who has been an artist and dramatic teller of *Jataka* tales, was greatly beloved and respected by all for her humble and exalted personality.

Srimati Gayatri Devi returned to Boston in time to conduct the Sunday Service on November 20th and the Thanksgiving Service on Thursday. Both were held in Boston. Although her stay was only for four weeks, it served to instill into the hearts of all the faithful members fresh inspiration and impetus for serving the cause of Vedanta with steadfast devotion.

On her journey between Los Angeles and Boston, Gayatri Devi stopped in Denver on November 14th to speak at the Unitarian Church Assembly Hall as a guest speaker of the Channing Club. On this, her first visit to the city, a warm welcome was accorded her. On the following evening a service was held at the home of a Vedanta student before an informal group.

On November 17th Gayatri Devi spoke before friends of Vedanta, in a private home, in Rochester, New York. Her subject was *Meditation.*

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

On September 6th one hundred and fifty or more persons gathered in the Temple patio to pay their final tribute to Sister Daya who for many years had spoken to them the word of God, and had inspired them by her living example. Sadness gave way to gratitude and peace as Srimati Gayatri Devi read the Scriptures of East and West and consoled the bereaved hearts by her comforting words. The Sisters and Brothers of Ananda Ashrama, supported by their large and faithful congregation, have with fortitude adjusted to the shock of Sister Daya's passing and to the changes which naturally followed. Gayatri Devi, in spite of her own deep sense of loss, has been a source of strength and comfort to all.

Autumn festivities, beginning with *Durga Puja,* or Divine Mother's Festival, and culminating with Thanksgiving, were observed with real ardor of devotion and enthusiasm. Sunday Service on October 23rd consisted of Gayatri Devi's inspired words explaining the significance of the Mother's Festival. Afterwards a Hindu dinner prepared by Gayatri Devi was served to seventy-five persons at the guest house.

The Festival of Lights or *Deepali* fell on Sunday evening, November 13th. Adorned with many candles, the Temple, filled to capacity, became a thing of indescribable beauty. Before an audience, eager and enchanted by the atmosphere of the hour, Gayatri Devi spoke of the heroic worship of *Kali,* Divine Mother in her aspects of darkness and terror, and of man's transcendence of these by the light of Soul—of which outer light is merely a symbol.

During Gayatri Devi's absence Services and Classes were conducted by various qualified members. She returned to California amid preparations for Christmas.

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